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UNCLAS SANTO DOMINGO 004763

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR WHA/CAR (MCISAAC), WHA/PPC (FALLS), G/TIP
(LINDERMAN)

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: GODR LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN AGAINST COMMERCIAL SEXUAL
EXPLOITATION OF MINORS

1. On August 27 the GODR launched a hard-hitting campaign against commercial sexual exploitation of minors. Billboards in beach areas will bear the message, "In the Dominican Republic, we protect our treasures. Our beaches, mountains, monuments and our most precious treasure: our children." The displays have already appeared in local press.

2. Commercials warning abusers about jail time for offenders and traffickers will soon hit the airwaves. Brochures promoting a child abuse prevention hotline and raising awareness of sexual exploitation already have been distributed with help from the National Association of Hotels and Restaurants (ASONAHORES). The Ministry of Public Health has also released a publication explaining the inter-institutional commission's responsibilities to prevent abuse, protect victims and prosecute criminals. This multifaceted campaign is another step in the GODR's efforts to address issues of trafficking in persons and acknowledges the government's responsibility for proactive moves to protect children's human rights.

3. The GODR organism responsible for the campaigns is the Inter-institutional Commission Against the Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents. Vice-President (and Minister of Education) Milagros Ortiz Bosch attended the kick-off. This commission, led by NGO Idefa (Institute of the Dominican Family), includes representatives from the Ministries of Foreign Relations, Education, Labor, Women, and Tourism, the National Police, and the Attorney General's office among others. Local partner ILO-IPEC (with financial backing from the US Department of Labor) and UNICEF are campaign sponsors along with the governments of Italy and Germany.
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